

Minutes of Meeting of Environment Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Tuesday 14 May 2024 in Council Offices, Burn Road, Cookstown

Members Present

Councillor Cuthbertson, Chair

Councillors J Buchanan, J Burton, Cahoon, Kelly, Groogan, Milne, McAleer, McElvogue, McGuigan, McNamee, Quinn (7.02 pm), Robinson, Varsani

Officers in Attendance

Mrs Campbell, Strategic Director of Environment (SD: Env)

Mr McAdoo, Assistant Director of Environmental Services (AD: ES)

Mr Conlon, Head of Technical Services (HoTS)

Mr Scullion, Assistant Director of Property Services (AD: PS)

Mr Curran, ICT

Mrs Grogan, Committee and Member Services Officer

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm.

The Chair, Councillor Cuthbertson welcomed everyone to the meeting and those watching the meeting through the Live Broadcast. Councillor Cuthbertson in introducing the meeting detailed the operational arrangements for transacting the business of the committee by referring to Annex A to this minute.

E096/24 Notice of Recording

Members noted that the meeting would be webcast for live and subsequent broadcast on the Council's You Tube site.

E097/24 Apologies

Councillors Mallaghan and Martin.

E098/24 Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of their responsibility with regard to declarations of interest.

E099/24 Chair's Business

The Chair advised that Councillor Cahoon wished to raise an issue under Chair's Business.

Councillor Cahoon referred to the footbridge at Lough Beg which has been closed for a few weeks and now that we are going into the summer months it would be important to have it reopened as it was one of the most popular tourist spots we have within the district. The member enquired if there was a timeframe for the reinstatement of the footbridge at this location.

The Assistant Director of Property Services (AD: PS) advised that he would come back to members with a more detailed timeframe but was aware of some work currently ongoing with respect to the design of a new footbridge. The AD: PS confirmed that he would follow the issue up with the Outdoor Recreation team and would provide members with a further update following discussions.

Councillor McGuigan seconded the request. The member advised that the same issue around the footbridge was brought to his attention today and although he had not been at Lough Beg for a while, a member of the public raised the concern with him.

Councillor Quinn entered the meeting at 7.02 pm.

Councillor McNamee concurred with previous comments as he had visited the site recently and agreed that the closure of the footbridge was causing a huge impact to the walk itself. The member hoped that this could be operational again very quickly coming into the summer months, otherwise it would be a disaster for that area.

Resolved That it be recommended to Council that Officers investigate the reinstatement of the footbridge at Lough Beg as a matter of urgency.

The Chair wished to thank the Council in relation to work carried out on the bridge at Dungannon Park. The member said that there was now a great new bridge, with the walk not being closed for long around the park which was great to see for public users.

Matters for Decision

E100/24 Bus Shelters Update

Mr Conlon, Head of Technical Services (HoTS) presented previously circulated report to update Members on the current bus shelter status.

The Chair welcomed Mr Conlon to his first committee meeting and wished him all the best in his new role as Head of Technical Services replacing Mr Raymond Lowry.

Councillor Robinson thanked Council as he had been involved with the bus shelters at Knockmany and Station Road, Clogher. The member referred to another bus shelter at Findermore Road on the A5/A4 which was a little more complicated as it needed more work around it and sought an update on where the budget would come from and what stage it currently was at.

The Strategic Director of Environment (SD: Env) said that she was aware of this particular application and the policy Council has at the moment relates to the installation of bus shelters and it was her understanding that this site was more of a bus stop. The SD: Env advised members that at the moment we would not have the budget within current Council budgets for that aspect of work as costings could be quite significant. This was something that was under consideration and would have to be taken through the various processes as there was no budget in place and something that SMT would have to consider as it sits outside the policy of bus shelters but ultimately it would be a Council decision as to progressing and where budget would come from.

Councillor Robinson enquired if there were any incidents like this in the past and what was the outcome.

The SD: Env said that it was her understanding that this was not something that has been done in the past and would be setting a precedent otherwise.

The AD: PS also stated that he was not aware of any scenarios for an actual bus stop configuration. The work typically carried out involves approvals coming to Technical Services team and then passed to Property Services team for installation of the bus shelter i.e. clearing the land, installing concrete base and installing the shelter and does not involve substantial environmental improvements or civil works to make this possible.

The Chair in referring to Councillor Robinson's query advised that he only knew the location from driving past it and enquired who owned the layby.

The AD: PS advised that he was not aware of the ownership but certainly could investigate the issue.

The Chair said that this may not relate to a bus stop but in other areas, like the A29, the Council took control of two laybys from DfI and spent a considerable amount of money on picnic facilities and landscaping and felt a precedent could already be in place. The Chair said that surely if this was a safety issue for a bus shelter and although he was unsure when Councillor Robinson alluded to the request being made for the bus shelter, felt that this would have been made fairly early on, enquired if this was retained by Council under a monthly update or does this need to move on to SMT.

The AD: PS advised that the bus shelter update sets out a very clear staged process and because it was quite unique the matter would have to be considered by SMT.

The Chair asked that an update on the situation regarding bus stop at Findermore Road, Clogher be brought back to a future committee meeting.

Proposed by Councillor McElvogue
Seconded by Councillor Quinn and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to –

- i) Note the contents of the report on the progress made on bus shelters within the District
- ii) Approve bus shelter application as listed under 3.4 and to move from stage 5:
 - 3Nr – 3.4.1 – 3.4.3:
 - 3.4.1 - (Millview Manor, Coalisland Road)
 - 3.4.2 - (Fintona Road, Clogher)
 - 3.4.3 – (McErleans Villas, Ballynease Road, Bellaghy)
- iii) Approve bus shelter application as listed under 3.7 to installation this month:
 - 1Nr – 3.7.1 (Lavey Chapel Carpark, Gulladuff)
- iv) Withdraw bus shelter application as listed under 3.9 this month:
 - 2Nr – 3.9.1 – 3.9.2:

- 3.9.1 - (Goland-Armaghlughey Road, Ballygawley)
- 3.9.2 – (Tullyhogue Village)
- v) Update on bus stop at Findermore Road, Clogher to be brought back to a future meeting of this committee.

E101/24 Dfl Roads Proposal to Mid Ulster District Council – Reduced Speed Limit 40mph at Quarry Road, Knockloughrim

Mr Scullion, Assistant Director of Property Services (AD: PS) presented previously circulated report to seek the agreement of Members in relation to a proposal from Dfl Roads to introduce a 40mph speed limit at Quarry Road, Knockloughrim.

Proposed by Councillor McNamee
Seconded by Councillor Kelly and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to endorse the proposal submitted by Department for Infrastructure Roads in relation to proposal to introduce a 40mph speed limit at Quarry Road, Knockloughrim.

Matters for Information

E102/24 Environment Committee minutes of meeting held on 16 April 2024

Members noted minutes of Environment Committee held on 16 April 2024.

Councillor McNamee referred to new parking Ringgo app and enquired if there were many issues this month compared to last month.

Mr Scullion (Assistant Director of Property Services (AD: PS) said that it has been reasonable quiet, and concerns has seemed to settle, although there were still a few queries, these were a lot less than last month.

E103/24 Update on Sites Managed for Biodiversity

Members noted update on the number of sites which are managed for biodiversity.

The Chair said that he was aware that an issue was raised in the past and this was why this list was before members tonight.

The Chair said that it was his understanding that these were sites which currently fall under our grass maintenance role within Council policy and enquired whether any of the new ones added on do not fit within our grass policy scheme.

The Assistant Director of Environmental Services (AD: ES) advised it did not.

The Chair referred to item 3.3 – No. 25 Clonoe roundabout and said that our policy was widely debated by Councillors in the previous mandate, where there were a limited number of roundabouts that Council maintain which were only gateway roundabouts i.e.

Ballygawley, Castledawson and one or two other roundabouts at the most. He remembered clearly a discussion had ensued at a number of meetings in relation to Tamnamore not being considered as a gateway roundabout into Mid Ulster. For grass maintenance, policy states that it has to fall inside a village within a 30mph zone and 300 plus residents and said that before proceeding with these, that this be investigated to make sure that those listed meets the policy for our grass maintenance rather than selecting a few from somewhere and including them into this. The Chair felt if these sites did not quality within policy that they should not be on this list.

The AD: ES advised that Clonoe roundabout was done historically going back to Dungannon legacy Council with reasons being raised at the last full Council meeting. The AD: ES stated that as it was a small roundabout, this was why it was selected for a wildflower trial to see how it would progress, with requests being made on a number of occasions. He said that Clonoe roundabout was a trial and going forward it would be used as a potential for other areas.

The Chair felt that was reasonable enough but should not be on our grass maintenance schedule as Tamnamore was removed as it was a 40mph zone and not deemed as a gateway roundabout. The Chair said that it could end up that people on the floor adding in roundabouts and places from all over and this was a reason why there was a need to be clear and stick to policy.

Councillor McAleer said that his issue did not relate to this particular issue and referred to agenda item 11, item 3.5 – Loughshore Community Services, Moortown and advised that they had received a grant for wildflower on the Battery Road and enquired whether this would be included at some point or was this something that was separate.

Councillor Quinn said that he had raised this issue last month and would certainly welcome Clonoe being added and was also aware of it being a legacy Council matter, but adding wildflower to the roundabout may stop people driving over it which would certainly be welcome. The member advised that there was wildflower planting down at Washingbay Park through Lough Neagh Partnership and given the walkways around Washingbay and the Park that lead up to the Holy River, felt that this would be an ideal location to plant wildflowers to see how it progresses and very welcome for the area. The member said that by looking over the 17 areas, felt that there was a good spread and Coalisland Recycling Centre was always one that caught the eye for anyone that used it due to staff always looking after it and good to see that continuing on. He was aware of some more being added to the list and hoped that this could be expanded over the next few years. He referred to discussion last month regarding Moneymore carriageway where it was indicated that this could prove costly to plant the wildflowers and enquired how much it would actually cost to set this up i.e. costs by acreage or by metre etc or how does costings be identified. The member felt that it would be well worth the expense as he had seen for himself some of these places which were striking and something different to what we were used to and after raising this matter last month, he was inundated with photos from other areas like Rotterdam and Amsterdam and commended the Council in taking the initiative for bringing this forward.

The Chair advised that the AD: ES had stated last month that there were daffodils planted on the Moneymore central reservation and the beauty of these flowers is that they reoccur each year, wildflowers would have to be mowed down and replanted. He

agreed that wildflowers were nice when they were flowering but when they die off, there could be a lot of complaints being received about why they were not being mowed off.

Councillor McGuigan felt that this should be referred back to the working group as there was a good piece of work done in relation to grass cutting and opportunities for planting wildflower with costings being carried out at that time. The member felt that we should revert back to this situation again and have another working group meeting to try and work this all out as there were a lot of issues being raised. The member said that in the past this was all mapped out with all parties having a copy of where wildflowers should be planted, and costings involved and felt that Council should refer back to this again as there was a potential for getting into another large discussion. The member said if the working group was reinstated, then we could proceed down that direction and bring a proposal to committee out of that group.

Councillor Robinson adding on from Councillor McGuigan's comments advised that he had sat on that working group and felt that it didn't sit well as part of the working group proposals to stop cutting the grass at the Ballygawley roundabout. The member said that he had discussions in the past with the AD: ES in relation to the new roundabout at Ballygawley which was built when the A4 was upgraded. Ballygawley was the gateway from Northern Ireland up to Donegal for southern traffic and was an eyesore and each year it was disgraceful and like a wilderness. Under the working group proposals, it was suggested to stop cutting grass at the old roundabout which would make it very poor looking for anyone travelling through from Dublin or Cork to Donegal and would portray a very bad image of the Clogher Valley and indeed Mid Ulster Council. The member said that it would be beneficial if something could be done to have this new roundabout included for maintenance. He said that he was aware that it was owned by DfI, and he had spoken to their representatives who were willing to let someone else maintain it.

The Chair advised that there had been a number of discussions at meetings which Councillors may remember in relation to the Ballygawley junction which was debated and refused along with Tamnamore and felt there was a need to be careful not to pick one or two that shouldn't be on the list due to requests coming from all over.

The AD: ES in response to Councillor McAleer's query advised that the scheme in Moortown was separate to this as it was funded through the Live Here Love Here Small Grants scheme.

The AD: ES in response to Councillor Quinn's query regarding Washingbay advised that he was not familiar with this issue but could investigate. In response to query regarding wildflower costings, he advised costings were made at the working group but did not have them at hand tonight but were provided to the working group.

The AD: ES in response to Councillor McGuigan's query advised that this could certainly be brought back to the working group but sought clarity on whether those identified tonight could be progressed or would this be a decision for the working group.

The Chair enquired if Councillor McGuigan was making a proposal that this all goes back to the working group which could be convened within the next few weeks.

Councillor McGuigan agreed that this would be his proposal. The member said that we started this piece of work and should be focussing on it and issues raised by Councillor Robinson should be included and discussed within the working group to see how we can progress going forward in terms of what we can do and what the costings were. The member felt if there were increased costs and we don't have the budget, then we have to make decisions as we cannot do everything that was requested, but certainly we need to have that discussion and try and move forward in a positive way. He referred to the biodiversity project in front of members which was all good but felt there was a need to manage that.

The Chair felt that this was a fair proposal and at the working group Officers could outline costings and whether maintenance includes grass being cut twice per year. He said that when the wildflowers die it looks unsightly but was important that the general public was aware that it could be like that for a few months until it is mowed off until the end of the season.

Councillor Quinn seconded the proposal.

Councillor Quinn said that he was happy to second the proposal to a point but would have been happy to let the list in front of members tonight go through and continue on with the working group for additional ones thereafter. He said we need to make sure that the working group is up and running as soon as possible to keep momentum going as we don't want this being done in October or November time as it would be too late when spring arrives next year. It would be beneficial to have it brought back to committee next month if possible.

Resolved That it be recommended to Council that Working Group discuss options and concerns around Biodiversity managed sites and a report is brought back to the Environment Committee.

E104/24 Eco Speak Competition 2024

Members noted update on the Eco Speak Competition for Mid Ulster Primary Schools.

The Chair advised that the AD: ES and himself was on the judging panel of the final which was greatly supported with approximately 22 schools taking part. The Chair said that it was a great return as the event had not run from 2019 and was something to build on, with a high standard of competitors and great to hear some of the new ideas coming forward. The Chair hoped that this will be another huge success next year again.

Councillor Robinson congratulated the Council and commended the event and said that it was great to see a pupil from his old school, Augher Central Primary School winning the competition.

E105/24 Fairtrade Re-Certification

Members noted update on the re-certification of the Council as a Fairtrade Community.

E106/24 Live Here Love Here Small Grants Scheme 2023/24 Update

Members noted update on the completed projects that received funding under the 2023 Live Here Love Here, Small Grants Funding Scheme for Mid Ulster District Council.

The Chair referred to his own DEA area, Dungannon, Killyman and Dungannon Swifts Charitable Trust benefiting from the scheme and was good to see local groups getting money back from this as it was something we pay into as a Council.

E107/24 Northern Ireland Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Management (LACMW) Report for October to December 2023

Members noted update on the Council's performance in relation to recycling and landfill diversion targets as outlined in the NIEA Northern Ireland Local Authority Waste Management Statistics Report for Quarter 3 of 2023/24 from October to December.

E108/24 Entertainment Licensing Applications

Members noted previously circulated report which provided update on Entertainment Licensing Applications across the Mid Ulster District.

E109/24 Building Control Workload

Members noted previously circulated report which provided update on the workload analysis for Building Control.

E110/24 Building Control 23/24 Workload Overview

Members noted previously circulated report which provided an update on the workload analysis for Building Control Service from 1st April 2023 to 31st March.

E111/24 Dual Language Signage Requests

Members noted previously circulated report which advised of the requests for Dual Language Signage from residents on the streets/roads in question.

Live broadcast ended at 7.24 pm.

Local Government (NI) Act 2014 - Confidential Business

Proposed by Councillor McNamee
Seconded by Councillor Quinn and

Resolved In accordance with Section 42, Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 that Members of the public be asked to withdraw from the meeting whilst Members consider items E112/24 to E120/24.

Matters for Decision

- E112/24 Cottagequinn Cemetery Capital Scheme Contract Award
- E113//24 Connecting Pomeroy Project
- E114/24 Internal Directional Signage and District Road Name Signage Tender
- E115/24 Procurement Framework for Washroom Services

Matters for Information

- E116/24 Environment Committee Confidential Minutes of meeting held on 16 April 2024
- E117/24 Capital Framework – ICT Contracts Update
- E118/24 Capital Framework – IST Contracts Update
- E119/24 Off-Street Car Parking Update 2023-2024
- E120/24 Structural Engineering Services Update

E121/24 Duration of Meeting

The meeting was called for 7.00 pm and ended at 7.50 pm.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____

Annex A – Introductory Remarks from the Chairperson

Good evening and welcome to the Council's [Policy & Resources/Environment/Development] Committee in the Chamber, [Cookstown/Dungannon/Magherafelt].

I specifically welcome the public watching us through the Live Broadcast. The Live Broadcast as aforesaid, will run for the period of our Open Business but will end just before we move into Confidential Business. I will let you know before this happens.

I would remind the public and press that taking photographs of proceedings or using any means to enable anyone not present to see or hear proceedings, or making a simultaneous oral report of the proceedings are not permitted.

Thank you and we will now move to the agenda.